NORTHEAST AFRICA SERIES
Vol. VII No. 8
(SOMALIA)

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY OF THE WOMAN'S COLLEGE GREENSBORO N. C.

American Universities Field Staff

REPORTS SERVICE

SOMALIA ON THE HORN

A Counterpoint of Problems Confronting One of Africa's New Nations

by E. A. Bayne

Part III: Politics

March 8, 1960

Richard F. Burton, the discerning British explorer of the 19th century who traveled the length of the Horn of Africa, once called the Somalis the "Irish of Africa." In the sense that these Hamitic people are in Africa but in many ways not necessarily of it, the figure is still apt. (There are moments when the visitor, in the midst of Somalis, feels closer to the Persian Gulf than to Dark Africa.) Somalis are quick to anger; a bloody knife battle between house servants is usually passed over as "just a little excitement." Their girls are among the prettiest in Africa, and when you pass them on the road they look directly into your eyes and frequently smile disconcertingly. Somalia is no Emerald Isle certainly, but like Eire, it has its border questions, since the Somali people inhabit not only one but five territories of the African Horn. Somalia will begin its independent existence in July of this year with an irredentist problem--no less bitter than the issue of Ulster--to complicate its external political relations as well as a mass of ancient tribal rivalries to get in the way of its domestic political progress.

[EAB-4-'60]

his publication is one of a continuing eries on current developments in world ffairs written by associates of the Ameri- an Universities Field Staff. It is distribu- ed by the AUFS as a useful addition to the merican fund of information on foreign ffairs.

AUFS associates have been chosen for heir skill in collecting, reporting, and valuating data. Each has combined long ersonal observation and experience in his oreign area with advanced studies relating o it.

EDWARD A. BAYNE, the author of this eport, a former economic adviser to the governments of Nationalist China and ran, has since 1953 written for the AUFS nainly about economic, political, and social spects of Italy, Israel, and Iran. His resi- dence is in Rome.

Publications under the imprint of the American Universities Field Staff are not elected to accord with an editorial policy and do not represent the views of its mem- bership. Responsibility for accuracy of facts and for opinions expressed in the let- ers and reports rests solely with the indi- vidual writers.

Copyright © 1960
American Universities Field Staff, Inc.
366 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.

Politics in the modern sense began in Somalia during the period of the British military occupation from 1941 through 1949. The British brought with them a philosophy of colonial management permitting a larger measure of native participation in government than the Italians had ever allowed. Nine years is a short time in a nation's history, but it was long enough to give the innate sense of nationality among the younger Somali leaders a chance to express itself so urgently as modern nationalism that it had to be recognized by the outside world. As a consequence, when the Italians returned to Somalia in 1950, they did not come as colonialists but as tutors administering a ten-year trusteeship under the authority of the United Nations. They were charged to bring the country to independence in a decade, and this, for better or for worse, they have done, and the Somalis are about to assume the burden of their own destiny.

Somalia confronts multiple problems. If any one factor could be singled out as crucial to the future of responsible government in independent Somalia, it would be, it seems to me, whether the Somalis have the ability to modify their traditional tribal institutions along modern constitutional lines successfully enough so that the result can withstand the stress of social and economic development. Somalia differs from other emerging African and Asian nations in that its nationalism and political consciousness generally have not been the outcome of industrialization, detribalization, and the growth of new urban classes. Its politics are based more--and will likely continue to be based for some years to come--upon clan loyalties and rivalries, although as development, with its external contacts and urbanizing influences, proceeds an inevitable process of detribalization will take place. Possibly the results will be more satisfying than those achieved in areas like the Belgian Congo and Ghana where the process was speeded up.

There is some evidence to support a hopeful prognosis in that the hypernationalism of the Arab world has had only a superficial effect in Somalia although the Somalis share Islam with the Arabs. Egypt, particularly, has attempted a widespread propaganda and educational campaign within Somalia that found favor chiefly among political opportunists rather than among the rural masses.[1] This seems to come about largely because "the traditional system, despite its predominantly segmentary character, contains the seeds of nationalism itself."[2]

---

[1] I interviewed two young Somalis who had been members of a Somali delegation to the Cairo Afro-Asian congress of a year ago. Both had sympathy with the general purposes of the meeting, but both took pains to point out in their own addresses to the delegates the separateness of Somali nationalism and their unwillingness to be herded into a bloc. Both, incidentally, said they had allegiance to nongovernmental political groupings in Somalia.

[2] I. M. Lewis, in From Tribal Rule to Modern Government, ed. Raymond Apthorpe, The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Lusaka, 1959, p. 159.

Few changes of a political nature occurred in Somalia during the Italian colonial administration. The Italians for 60 years operated on the theory that native life was best left alone, so long as there was no conflict with their extremely limited economic development measures or with their ill-fated imperialistic ventures. Once this policy had been upset by the British, Somali political action resulted. Largely with British encouragement, a political party known as the Somali Youth League was organized.

Leadership of the SYL was based upon the powerful Hawiye tribe, who inhabit central Somalia and are a nomadic people now in process of settlement. Titular head of the SYL is Abdullahi Issa Mohammed, the present Prime Minister of Somalia, who characteristically shares his party leadership with other "elders." This leadership tends to be moderate in championing the irredentist cause of Greater Somalia which calls for amalgamation of all the lands in which Somalis have traditionally lived and grazed their cattle. Such moderation has put the leadership in conflict with the interests of the equally powerful Daarood tribe, whose nomadic roaming leads them into areas of British Somaliland, the Ethiopian Ogaden, and northern Somalia. The more articulate members of this tribe feel more strongly about the issue of Greater Somalia, and hold that a Hawiye-dominated government in Mogadiscio, located more than a thousand miles from Daarood territory, can hardly have the best interests of the more northern group adequately in mind. The remaining three major lineage groups, the Dir, Rahanwiin, and the Digil, remain largely outside the mainstream of political development dominated by these two large tribes, although they are in active protest.

The Rahanwiin and Digil groups centuries ago moved southward in Somalia to conquer the indigenous people (chiefly Galla and Bantu) who lived in the valleys of the Juba and Webbi Shebeli rivers and to become settled farmers. Their political interests are quite different from those of the more numerous nomads of the primeval northern reaches of Somalia. And they are giving voice to those interests. For example, one party, composed chiefly of Rahanwiin, has the separatism of the settled southern areas as the major plank of its platform.

Such conflicts of interest need not be irremediably divisive provided modern political institutions can be developed quickly enough to provide a means for their resolution. The positive and negative pressures seem at the moment to be about in balance. On the one hand, the five tribes, each with its ramified structure of clans, sub-clans, and families in a fairly primary sense, share much in their common genealogical origins, a common (unwritten) language, Islam, and a sense of urgency about nationality. On the other hand, within this Somali frame, the tribes still war with each other over the possession of water holes and territory in the interior, conduct family vendettas (there are generally accepted practices for the settlement of homicide involving a scale of camels paid; for example, 100 for a man, 50 for a woman in one area) and have carried these tribal antagonisms into modern "party" politics.

The administration of an orderly trusteeship by the Italians has required the careful evaluation of these tribal animosities, and as far as possible the organization of an effective pan-Somali party (with strong representation from both the Hawiye and Daarood tribes) that could begin to make the transition from tribal-politics-in-modern-dress to more national and sophisticated statesmanship. After a period of indecision, caused as much probably by Italian unfamiliarity with this kind of colonial problem as by the actual difficulties in Somalia, the administration plumped for the Somalia Youth League and gave it some notable advantages. The acceptance of the SYL as the leadership group was based on several obvious factors. The Hawiye and Daarood tribes had traditionally been the most powerful and together, the most numerous. The coalition of these two, which had been sporadic but was increasingly firm within the League's ranks, gave the best promise of building a national political vehicle for self-government which had been envisaged in the terms of the United Nations resolution. In terms of numbers, a greater proportion of the "elite" of Somalia came from these tribal backgrounds[3] and had been the first, with British encouragement and later Egyptian, to cry for independence. The northerners had the one historical patriot of modern times to their credit, the so-called Mad Mullah, who in the beginning of the century had fought the Ethiopians, Italians, and British in an intermittent colonial war. The image was strong.

The problem has continued to center on the development of the SYL as an increasingly intertribal party. The Italian authority has sponsored the SYL and allegedly has even connived in maintaining its dominance since elective practices were first installed in 1956. Other parties have continued to exist, of course, and political riots in Mogadiscio are not unknown. About a year ago the capital experienced a major political riot when, in a before-the-fact protest to the local United Nations Advisory Council (composed of representatives of the Philippines, Colombia, and Egypt) the minority parties presented a list of 15 complaints and recommendations for the fair management of the first national parliamentary elections Somalia was to experience in March of 1959. Events demonstrated that the minority parties were justified in their motive if not their method. It is generally admitted that the elections were something less than honest and that a considerable amount of quite sophisticated shenanigans took place. The result itself was somewhat suspect when the SYL walked away with 83 of the 90 seats in the legislature. They now hold 86, as some of the minority parties faded away after this sweep (and the leader of one party became a student at the University of Indiana).

Of the surviving minority parties (numbering four a year ago) one

---

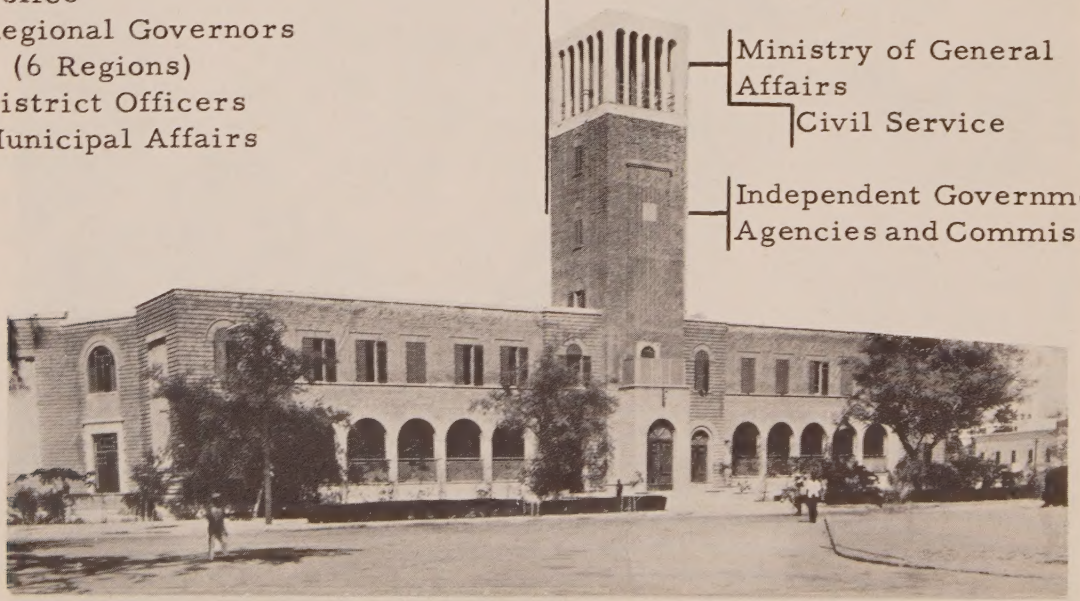
[3] One anthropologist has pointed out that the ruggedness of the northern areas, and nomadic life in general, holds little charm for the intellectualized Somali, with the result that a greater proportion of Daarood and Hawiye have sought the urban activities of Mogadiscio, of which politics and government service are the most attractive.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA

(Abbreviated)

- The Parliament
  - Unicameral
  - 90 Members
- Prime Minister
  - Cabinet

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - Embassies
  - Consulates
- Ministry of Justice
  - Courts
- Ministry of Agriculture
  - Government Tractor Pool
  - Marketing Companies
  - Extension Service
- Ministry of Interior
  - Police
  - Regional Governors (6 Regions)
  - District Officers
  - Municipal Affairs
- Minister for Parliamentary Affairs
- Ministry of Finance
  - Customs
  - Tax Bureau
  - Currency Agency
  - Credit Institute
- Ministry of Industry, Commerce
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health, Veterinary Affairs, and Labor
  - Field Service
- Ministry of General Affairs
  - Civil Service
- Independent Government Agencies and Commissions



Parliament Building in Mogadiscio, formerly the Italian Fascist Party Headquarters, renovated in 1958.

stands out as a potentially responsible opposition. This is the Hizbia-Digil-Mirifle, basically a party with tribal origins but with at least an elementary interest in constitutionalism. The others persist, if with decreasing effectiveness, apparently.

This year the minority groups tried to seize another opportunity to let the world know of their discontent at a time when I could observe some of the Government's precautionary measures. In February, when I was in Somalia to attend the opening ceremonies of a university institute, the week of festivities that the Italians attempted to convert into a general conference on international co-operation in Africa was enlivened by the arrival of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjold, and his deputy, Dr. Ralph Bunche. Hammarskjold had been in Somalia two years before, but since that time Somalia had conducted its national election, had received the gift of independence from the General Assembly, and Italian authority had become virtually pro forma in all but foreign affairs. Mogadiscio suddenly became as full of political rumor as a Lisbon café during World War II. A demonstration--and likely a revolt--was being plotted by the minority parties. Foreigners were quietly told to remain close to the hotel or other official places, and in no case to visit the slum areas of the city.

Police reinforcements were plainly apparent, and as I passed through the city lines from a journey into the interior on the afternoon the UN party arrived, it was necessary to stop at two roadblocks. Reinforcements for the non-SYL parties were clearly being discouraged. The precautions were in response to a request by the minority party leaders for permission to inform

Somalia's Prime Minister greets Dr. Bunche at the airport.

the Secretary-General of their grievances, some of which were admittedly real. The government (with the approval of the Italians, it is assumed) denied the application, and were threatened with illegal demonstrations which occasioned the security measures that became somewhat obvious before the UN group departed. Actually, not all the members of the SYL-government were in favor of the refusal, and quietly, the Somali police commandant informed Dr. Bunche of the situation and suggested that private meetings with the minority parties be arranged "to take the heat off." This was not done to my knowledge, and everyone sighed with relief when the Secretary-General had departed for the next stage of his tour around Africa. The crisis had passed and if the minority parties had lost a skirmish, it had been in the larger interest of presenting a façade of stability in Somalia that might become habitual in time.

The Somalia Youth League government that will take full responsibility for the state in July must meet not only the challenge of further orderly social and economic progress, but must also attempt alone what it, with the Italian administration, has been attempting to do during the past three or four years in particular. First it must broaden the base of its own party among other tribes in the hope of creating a truly national party, and second encourage minority parties to do the same in the hope of creating a responsible national opposition. Effort along these lines has been expended. Two years ago, for example, a Greater Somalia League was formed under the leadership of a former SYL official who had been spending several years in Cairo under Gamal Nasser. More militant for the unification of Somali territory than the SYL, and attempting to win a broad national support by sloganized nationalism, the GSL continues as an irritant for the government although two factors militate against its continuing success. The Somali is no more interested in Egyptian imperialism than in Italian, and second, a public reaffirmation of British policy advocating a union of at least British Somaliland and Somalia was given a year ago, rewarding the moderates in the SYL for waiting for Greater Somalia without a frenetic campaign.

Observers in Somalia, both foreign and native, take a large measure of comfort from the persistence of tribal consciousness and rivalry. "Political totalitarianism, for instance, is unthinkable in Somalia: tribal feelings are too strong to give it a basis," wrote the Italian trusteeship authority's press chief,[4] but the political stability of Somalia under its still-to-be-written constitution will rest upon the ultimate scrapping of tribal loyalties in favor of political groupings of a national and multitribal character. Such everyday functions as a customs service, police protection, health services, army organization (if an army is established), and the broader aspects of administration of social justice cannot be contained within such segmentary tribal limitations but must become national in application. Whether this can

---

[4] In Africa, Special Report, Vol. 3, No. 12, December 1958, Washington, D. C. (a special issue devoted to Somalia and Independence).

be achieved without undergoing the greater dangers of a native colonialism (as has been experienced in Liberia) under the present elite may be a minor risk in Somalia, but it is clear that this small elite group, at best governmentally inexperienced, will find the development of modern democracy difficult and frustrating. It is for these leaders to continue a trusteeship along much the same lines as they have seen in the past few years.

Were this an earlier age in which Somalia could be given its independence and forgotten, a return to tribalism might be a satisfactory solution for the majority of Somalis for whom modernity has little meaning as yet. No such fantasy is feasible, obviously, since Somalia is not only to be a member of the burgeoning family of nations, and likely a member of the United Nations with alacrity, but it is also a nation of the Horn of Africa. Politically exposed to view as it will be for decades to come, Somalia will find that its political stability and progress will have a considerable effect upon its foreign relations--a segmented country is to its neighbors an invitation to potential enemies and a discouragement to would-be friends. The regional protection of a new Atlantic oikoumenē that might prevent local imperialisms in Africa and elsewhere has not yet been phrased or structured in these days of withdrawing empires. Somalia's protection, its dry powder, seems likely to rest on its ability to progress along the road to political maturity.

Domestic politics are thus related to the broadest frame of foreign politics. The Somalia that hoists its flag of independence in July will be a country whose boundaries with Ethiopia have not yet been fixed, and at this writing, at least, a country for whom the definition of citizenship has not yet been written. Somali nationalism makes the two problems related, and confusing perhaps, to those for whom African tribalism is an anthropological fact of only academic interest. To be a Somali is to be a member of a Somali tribe, with a kinship to other tribes, practicing the same Sunni sectarianism of Islam, settled or following flocks in the general area of the Horn. To delimit this consciousness to an area legally known as Somalia, but including less than two-thirds of the territory traditionally considered by the Somalis to be their land, is to deny the sense of nationality on which the edifice of statehood rests. The technical question of Somali citizenship inevitably involves territory, and thus involves Ethiopia. More than one Somali told me that the question of citizenship cannot be solved until there is a conclusive definition of Greater Somalia.

Relations with the Northern Province of Kenya, which contains about 80,000 Somalis, represent perhaps the least urgent aspect of the territorial questions. Kenyan Somalis are perhaps the least politically conscious group of all, and in the welter of problems that attend the coming independence of the colony, the Somali minority has little importance. Moreover, in an attempt to delimit the arduous difficulties of creating a multiracial society in Kenya, the British authorities have discouraged any nationalistic activity on behalf of the Somali minority, although going on record at various times in favor of

a Greater Somalia. The problem, in essence, has not yet arisen.

In French Somaliland, where the 30,000 Somalis constitute about half of the protectorate's population, a modified form of self-government exists in which Somalis participate. A majority of the total population voted last year to remain within the French Community, and although Somalis in Mogadiscio suspect that this expression of adherence to France had been the result of undemocratic pressures (the French authorities have not been receptive to activities of the Somali Youth League, or helpful propaganda along similar lines conducted by Egypt), they admit that until the problem is settled with Ethiopia, little attention can be paid to aspirations of the Somalis in French territory. There is an economic reason here also, since the French colony exists largely to be an entrepôt for Ethiopia; the port of Djibouti is a railhead for the French-Ethiopian railway that is the only outlet of central Ethiopia at present, although development of Ethiopian highways may ultimately deprive the French enclave of economic primacy by opening traffic to Massawa, the port of now Ethiopian Eritrea. The French, assuredly, are not interested in offending a sensitive Ethiopia by gratuitously handing territory to an expansionist Somalia and, in any event, would not likely seek to weaken any part of the French Community at present without clear political rewards.

The disposition of British Somaliland, which as a territory is even less favored with natural resources than Somalia itself,[5] and contains 600,000 Somalis (chiefly of the Daarood and Hawiye tribes) who are for the most part nomadic pastoralists, seems clearer. As a British protectorate it has served strategically, along with Aden, as a sea gate to the Red Sea. The British exercised sound military judgment in the 1870's when they took over the faltering Egyptian hegemony of the coastal area, made protective treaties with some of the local chieftains and added another link of empire. In the 1960's, the usefulness of such strategy has been largely modified by technology and international politics. Moreover, the demands of colonial administration for development and increased services in the protectorate now cost the British taxpayer about $15 million a year. British realism, in the sense of enlightened self-interest, has indicated that Somaliland would not stand by itself and that a union with Somalia was both desirable and inevitable. It is not surprising that the concept of a Greater Somalia has been British policy for nearly 20 years, although it has been expressed in various contexts, including British expansionism.

After British forces had defeated the Italian legions in East Africa and liberated Ethiopia, all of Somalia was for several years under a unified, if military, administration. When control of Ethiopia was passed back to Emperor Haile Selassie in 1944, the British Government acted to protect the

---

5 An American oil company is presently prospecting for petroleum on somewhat the same speculative basis as it is operating in Somalia.

Somalis by reserving certain extraterritorial rights in the Ogaden,[6] where the Somalis had traditionally grazed their cattle. In 1954 there was a reaffirmation of the agreement which had the effect of giving to British colonial representatives control over Somalis in this area of Ethiopia. Still in force, the provision is the cause of continuous friction, even though the rhythm of nomadism has time-honored recognition in the area. When Ethiopia lodges one of its frequent complaints, the charge usually is that Somalis from the protectorate have carried arms as they moved into Ethiopia and have engaged in intertribal pillage. The agreement requires that nomads leave their arms behind when they cross the border. Both parties deny culpability or provocation in these incidents, but in the fluid and undisciplined conditions that exist, it seems likely that "both sides are guilty of bad faith in what is an impossible situation" as one American diplomat remarked to me in Addis Ababa.

Although Britain was Ethiopia's liberator from the Italians, relations between the two countries have been touchy and unsatisfactory for decades largely because of the British position on a Greater Somalia. British statements of policy have over a long period been clear on the issue. In 1941, shortly after the British took over Ethiopia, the then military governor suggested that the whole Horn of Africa might well be unified and under British protection become a part of the Commonwealth. In 1946, the then British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, suggested that Ethiopia divest itself of the Ogaden region and permit a development of a unified Somalia "so that the nomads could lead their frugal existence with the least possible hindrance . . . [and have] a real chance of a decent economic life." In 1954, when difficulties between the Somalis and Ethiopians in Ogaden grew ugly, the British actually moved troops to Aden with some publicity of the fact, and the Ethiopians were asked again to cede the Ogaden to the British, but they refused.[7] Just one year ago, the then British Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, gave a speech in British Somaliland which still reverberates in Mogadiscio and Addis Ababa, committing Britain to continuation of its program of development to prepare the protectorate for self-government by 1962, which most British seem to think is possible, at least on as secure a basis as obtains in Somalia. Lennox-Boyd went on to say:

> "Her Majesty's Government is aware of the desire expressed by many Somalis of the Protectorate that there should be a closer association between this territory and Somalia. If therefore when Somalia becomes independent, the Legislative Council of the Protectorate formally resolves that negotiations with the Government of Somalia be instituted to determine the terms and conditions on which a closer association of the two territories might be achieved, Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would be ready to transmit this resolution to the Government of Somalia. . . ."

---

[6] The Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of December 19, 1945, Article 7.

[7] Ethiopia had received the area from Britain, by treaty, in 1897.

Somali tribesmen graze their cattle in the Ogaden.

The response in Addis Ababa is part of another chapter, but in Mogadiscio the rejoicing was considerable. Somalis entertain a real fear of Ethiopian expansionism, which a declaration of the Emperor in 1956 did not dispel. He advocated the "return" of all Somalis to their fatherland on a federated basis akin to the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia that had been granted by the United Nations. He put forward historical claims for this policy of recovery of ". . . 'lost provinces' upon grounds that do some violence to history and take insufficient account of present political and religious facts."[8] In essence, the remarks were imperialistic and presaged an intransigence when a Somali delegation visited Addis Ababa last year to discuss the problem of the as yet undefined border between Somalia and Ethiopia.

Although receiving the Prime Minister and his Italian advisers with courtesies dictated by protocol, the Ethiopians would not concede the necessity of modifying the provisional border between the two countries which had been established by a treaty between the Italians and the Emperor Menelik in 1908. Even though this border had been changed during the Italian occupation of the Horn before World War II, and the problem of the Somali populations in the Ogaden persisted, the Ethiopian position remained firm and left the Somali fledgling politicians with no progress made, and vulnerable to the opposition in Mogadiscio which contended that a boundary made by a colonial adminis-

---

[8] Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia, London, 1948, p. 438. This book is still regarded as the classic work on Ethiopia and its internal as well as external problems.

tration, without the consent of the governed Somalis, could not be binding upon a now free Somalia. Moreover, some argued, a constitution should be based upon a firm concept of boundaries. Against this background, the British declaration of a year ago was a significant variation on a vital theme of political relations on the Horn. It is at this point in history that Somalia becomes independent.

* * * * *

I had met the Governor of Benadir the night of my arrival in Mogadiscio and we had struck up a friendly acquaintance during the ensuing period of my stay in Somalia. He is one of the six regional governors of the internal administration of Somalia, and among the young elite who will govern the country after July (and in effect already do in most respects) he seemed somewhat typical. His father had been an official interpreter for the Italian administration before the war, and had profited from his unusual position to the point of now being a senior statesman and, in the present cabinet, the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs. The young (thirty-six) Governor had started early on his bureaucratic career. He had been a policeman, had attended the new advanced school for economics and political science, and had been sent to Rome for a year of advanced study. On his return to Somalia in 1956 he was given a post as regional governor in the north and he did a credible job. When the Italians first turned over internal administration to the Somalis, he was rewarded with the most important governorship which included responsibility for the capital.

A governor operates in Somalia much as a provincial prefect does in Italy. He is the senior representative of the government and exercises superior authority to all other local bodies, elected or not. In Somalia's case, however, his authority over tribal councils is somewhat tenuous, depending upon the degree of co-operation the local tribal groups are prepared to grant. This Governor's attitudes seemed to me to be a norm for the younger, and within the elite group, politically-minded Somalis. I went to call on him at his office one morning (which in a British colony would have been required etiquette) and we discussed the politics of Somalia for an hour.

The Governor of Benadir.

A governor receives a salary of about $210 a month, and if he builds a house (which is likely) the government will pay 50 per cent of the cost, and lend him the rest. He may rent this new house to foreign diplomats, as many do, and double his income. By some bureaucratic legerdemain, he also has the privilege of purchasing foreign exchange permits which are marketable

to merchants for luxury imports at a premium of about five per cent, which provides a useful extra income. A governor is also given a small Italian car for general use. There may be thus a dangerous economic gap developing between the governors and the governed.

At a governor's level of the bureaucracy, where permits for various privileges are granted by him, and access to government funds is relatively easy on a "favors exchanged" basis, the corruption of the young officialdom seems most likely. Even this Governor had not escaped unhappy charges although they were quieted quickly. However, since he represented a senior level of administration I suspected that his views might reveal Somali reactions on other matters.

I began by asking him what assurance of political stability Somalia had.

"The country is ruled today by a party composed chiefly of the two major tribes of Somalia. We two tribes [he is a Hawiye] have always ruled in our own way and it is natural that we should have the responsibility now. Of course, we hope to broaden the base of this rule, but this will take time--a long time," he said.

"Isn't this rule going to be contested by other tribes?" I asked. "We seem to have a situation this week of potential political trouble."

"It will pass. We have taken precautions,"[9] he said. "But we have more important difficulties. What, for example, should we do about joining the British Commonwealth? Do you think we should?"

I was somewhat startled by the question. "You assume, I gather, that the Lennox-Boyd speech of last year has made this a real question for you?"

"Of course. It is only a matter of time before the two largest parts of Somalia join. Then we must decide whether to join the British."

"I would imagine that this is a task for your new foreign office to decide. You might think also of establishing a research group to study just such problems at your university center. Other countries do this, including America, often. There are many aspects of the suggestion--the sterling area, your part in the European Common Market[10]--it is a complicated decision.

---

[9] Somalia's lack of an effective free press that might act as a safety valve is regrettable. The Italian authorities publish the only daily--in about 1,200 copies--and a carefully watched weekly represents student opinion. Both are in Italian, but a weekly in English that is published in British Somaliland is also distributed in Mogadiscio.

[10] Italy's adherence to the European Economic Community included Somalia, presumably on a permissive basis after Somalia's independence.

Has Somalia decided on its relations with Egypt, for example? This has a bearing on any future ties with the British."

"We, like the Egyptians are a Muslim people, and unfriendly relations with them are unthinkable. However, this is not to admit that we do not fear Egyptian interference in our affairs."

"Wouldn't your relations with the Italians be a consideration also?"

"No. Once the Italians have finished here this year our relations with them will be the same as with other foreigners."

"Does that mean Somalis don't like the Italians?" I asked.

"Not at all. I would describe the Italian occupation here as 'primo amaro, ora caro' [bitter before the war, sweet today]. Even when they first returned to the Trusteeship they tried to run us as they had before but they learned quickly. They bribed us, hoping that we would reject the British help, but after a year or so they stopped and have done a good job for us since," he said.

"What do you hope to do when independence arrives. Will you remain in the administrative service?" I asked, wondering where his ambitions lay.

"I hope I can be an ambassador someplace. I frequently have been consulted by the Prime Minister on foreign problems and with good fortune, perhaps, I will be in the Foreign Office," he smiled as he mentioned his ambition--a triffle winsomely, I thought.

"I hope you make it," I said, as I left his office.

Somalia is very young in some respects, full of hope and what might pardonably be called national jazz! Politics, internal or external, is a necessary art and at this threshold of independence well-wishers of Somalia can only hope that its heritages of tribal politicking--without resorting to the poisoned spear that is still characteristic of most, perhaps--can be transmuted into modern conventional techniques. Moreover, we may hope that this change can be accomplished without losing the native wisdom and morality that is hidden in the heritage of all peoples.

E. A. Bayne

[Photos: Fotocine, Mogadiscio, the U.S. Information Service, and E. A. Bayne.]